

File: CR-12-01  
Ref: RD 2016 Jul 29

SEP 30 2016

Mayor Derek Corrigan and Council  
City of Burnaby  
4949 Canada Way  
Burnaby, BC V5G 1M2

Dear Mayor ~~Derek~~ Corrigan and Council:

**Re: Request for Assistance with Promoting RateOurHome.ca Campaign**

At its July 29, 2016 regular meeting, the Board of Directors of the Greater Vancouver Regional District ('Metro Vancouver') considered a staff report on home energy labelling and adopted the following resolution:

*That the GVRD Board direct staff to forward the report dated June 7, 2016, titled "Update on Sustainability Innovation Fund Project – Home Energy Labelling Pilot Project" to member jurisdictions and provide access to the RateOurHome.ca campaign materials in an effort to increase municipal involvement in the campaign.*

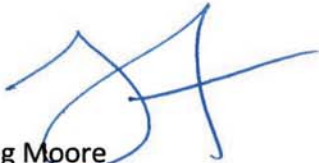
Metro Vancouver has established goals to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 33% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 from 2007 levels. Approximately one third of the GHG emissions in the region are from buildings, and of that, single-family homes are responsible for about 40% of the GHGs from buildings. Metro Vancouver is implementing RateOurHome.ca (formerly the *Home Energy Labelling Pilot Project*) in order to create awareness and make GHGs and energy use in homes more visible for everyone, and provide homeowners with a necessary tool to make informed decisions for their families and the environment.

The RateOurHome.ca campaign will launch throughout Metro Vancouver in October 2016. The key outreach channels of the campaign include a website, with an interactive map to view real EnerGuide home energy labels provided by Metro Vancouver residents, paid social media and online marketing, earned media, and targeted outreach (workshops and webinars) to real-estate agents and builders.

Our member jurisdictions are uniquely positioned to promote the RateOurHome.ca campaign to target audiences, namely homebuyers, home sellers, homeowners, real-estate agents and home builders. To this end, we request your assistance in ensuring that the RateOurHome.ca campaign materials described in the attached report reach the appropriate staff (e.g. in planning, permitting, sustainability or communications departments) at your local government.

If your staff have any questions or require additional information on the RateOurHome.ca program, please have them contact Erik Blair, Senior Policy and Planning Analyst at (604) 436-6747 or by email at [Erik.Blair@metrovancover.org](mailto:Erik.Blair@metrovancover.org).

Yours truly,

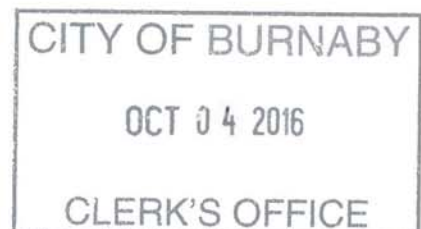


Greg Moore  
Chair, Metro Vancouver Board

GM/RQ/eb

Encl: Report titled "Update on Sustainability Innovation Fund Project – Home Energy Labelling Pilot Project" dated June 7, 2016.

18964275







To: Climate Action Committee

From: Eve Hou, Air Quality Planner, Parks, Planning and Environment Department  
Jerry Colman, Policy Coordinator, External Relations Department

Date: June 7, 2016

Meeting Date: July 6, 2016

Subject: **Update on Sustainability Innovation Fund Project – Home Energy Labelling Pilot Project**

## RECOMMENDATION

That the GVRD Board direct staff to forward the report dated June 7, 2016, titled “Update on Sustainability Innovation Fund Project – Home Energy Labelling Pilot Project” to member jurisdictions and provide access to the RateOurHome.ca campaign materials in an effort to increase municipal involvement in the campaign.

## PURPOSE

To provide the Climate Action Committee with a progress update on the Metro Vancouver home energy labelling pilot project, funded in part by the 2015 GVRD Sustainability Innovation Fund.

## BACKGROUND

In February 2015, the Climate Action Committee received a presentation from staff on the “Home Energy Labelling Pilot Project” and in June 2015, this pilot project was awarded \$100,000 from the GVRD Sustainability Innovation Fund. This report provides an update on the project.

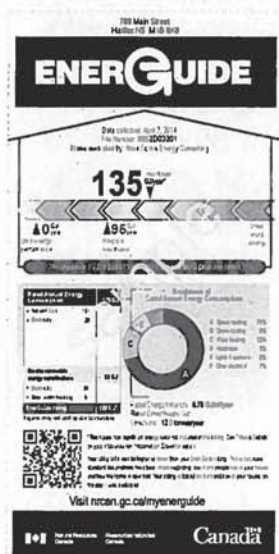


Figure 1: Sample EnerGuide label, effective April 2016.

Home energy labelling makes building energy performance ‘visible’ through validated and easy-to-understand labels, thereby allowing homebuyers to make more informed decisions. The national standard for home energy labelling is established by Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN). NRCAN registers energy advisors to perform residential energy assessments using NRCAN’s EnerGuide Rating System (ERS). The ERS can be used to assess new and existing homes, including single-family homes, duplexes, row houses, townhomes, and low-rise apartments. Following an assessment, the property is given an EnerGuide label, similar to the one shown in Figure 1.

The goal of this project is to increase both the number of homes in the region that are voluntarily labelled through the Natural Resources Canada EnerGuide rating system, and the public display of these labels.

Development of creative assets for the campaign began in fall 2015. This work was guided by a steering committee comprised of representatives from BC Hydro, City Green Solutions, FortisBC, Greater Vancouver Home Builders Association, Natural Resources Canada, Pembina Institute, Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, City of New Westminster, Township of Langley, BC Ministry of Energy and Mines, and BC Home Safety and Standards Branch. Through early consultation with this



steering committee and a workshop held with builders and realtors, the project direction was established as follows:

- **Increase broad awareness of home energy labeling**  
Raise general awareness in all audiences from currently low levels.
- **Wherever possible link awareness to informational resources**  
Including website, collateral materials.

Other main results:

- **Key message is home energy labelling is good value**  
It provides benefits such as comfort, peace of mind, better indoor air quality, a better performing home, reliability, home pride, etc.
- **Primary audiences are home buyers and home sellers**  
These audiences need to start asking for the label to create a demand from builders.
- **Approach is to connect the label with a genuine need**  
The goal is to sell the benefits of an energy efficient home (cost savings, comfort, peace of mind etc.), and raise awareness of the label as an informational tool at the point of sale.

#### FOCUS GROUP TESTING

Based on the direction from the Steering Committee and other stakeholders, several creative concepts were developed targeting home buyers and home sellers. In January 2016, two of the concepts were tested with focus groups, comprised of homeowners and prospective homebuyers and home sellers. The testing revealed a number of key themes and observations towards the creative concepts and messages shown:

- **Considerations when buying a home:** Personal values were a high priority when making a home purchase decision. Although the initial considerations were price, location and size, the secondary factors were focused on the quality of structure itself, including comfort. Some members of the group discussed the importance of a home inspection to avoid costly surprises, both in terms of capital and maintenance on a home.
- **Preference for creative concepts:** The focus groups were shown two creative concepts, with a focus on homebuyers and home sellers. The group readily eliminated the more complex concept of the two. They preferred a simple concept delivered in a friendly but serious tone.
- **Advertising channels:** The focus group provided input on where they would go when buying or selling a home. They emphasized the importance of online resources and also noted that realtors are an important source of information and guidance.

#### CAMPAIGN CONCEPT AND BRAND

Based on the feedback provided by the Steering Committee and focus groups, a final concept was selected (see Figure 2) for the campaign. This simple, straight-forward and clear direction introduces homebuyers and home sellers to the concept of home energy labelling and its role. It highlights the role of the label as helping “spot” or identify an energy efficient home. The copy beneath the ad describes how the label can “take the guesswork out of finding a reliable, better performing and energy efficient home” when in the market to buy, and “help your property stand out in a sea of same” when looking to sell.

#### CAMPAIGN ELEMENTS

To support these creative concepts, Metro Vancouver developed a brand for the project – [RateOurHome.ca](http://RateOurHome.ca). This brand (provided as Attachment 1) will represent the website URL, which will



serve as the key resource for learning about home energy labelling. A draft showing initial content under development is shown in Attachment 2. All campaign materials will direct users to this online resource, which will serve several functions:

- Provide basic information on home energy labelling, including how to read the label and how to get a label.
- Provide audience-specific information on how home energy labelling benefits them, either as a seller, buyer, builder or realtor.
- Host an interactive, searchable map where homeowners can voluntarily display their EnerGuide labelled home.

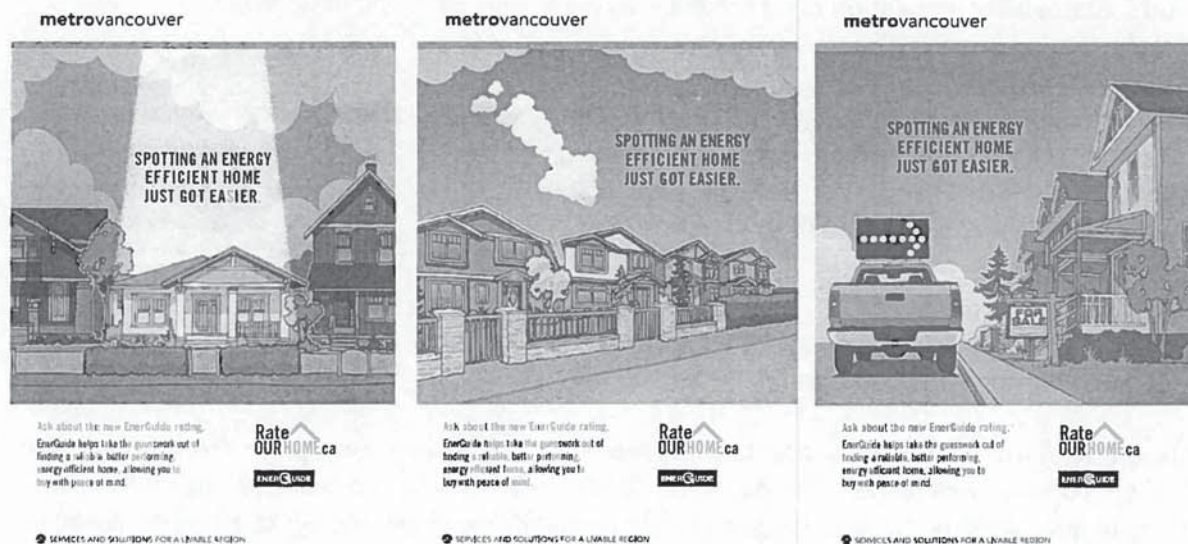


Figure 2: Print ads for the RateOurHome.ca campaign

Other campaign elements include:

- Campaign advertising (including print ads in community or real estate publications, online display ad, pre-roll video, social media paid posts, and printed collateral such as brochures and banners);
- Earned media;
- Direct engagement with local governments and utilities to integrate RateOurHome.ca disclosure with new home programs already requiring EnerGuide rating;
- Webinars, conferences and seminars for secondary audiences (realtors, builders and local government/utilities)

## PROJECT PROGRESS AND TIMELINES

The RateOurHome.ca campaign is well underway with the following steps completed and planned:

- **Complete:** Program terms, branding, logo, website, promotional videos, print collateral and forms, and waivers have been finalized.
- **July:** Recruitment of voluntarily disclosed labels and the involvement of stakeholders and member jurisdictions in the RateOurHome.ca website.
- **Aug/Sept:** Population of web map with labels through word-of-mouth outreach and direct engagement with secondary audiences.
- **Oct:** Launch of advertising campaign begins in earnest, with a budget to continue through spring 2017.



Staff intend to return to this Committee in spring 2017 with an update on the campaign, including metrics and recommendations.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. That the GVRD Board direct staff to forward the report dated June 7, 2016, titled "Update on Sustainability Innovation Fund Project – Home Energy Labelling Pilot Project" to member jurisdictions and provide access to the RateOurHome.ca campaign materials in an effort to increase municipal involvement in the campaign.
2. That the GVRD Board receive for information the report dated June 7, 2016, titled "Update on Sustainability Innovation Fund Project – Home Energy Labelling Pilot Project".

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The RateOurHome.ca campaign budget is \$180,000. The 2015 GVRD Sustainability Innovation Fund supported \$100,000 of these costs with the balance funded from the approved program budgets in air quality and climate change (\$25,000 in 2015 and \$15,000 in 2016) and a grant from the Homeowners Protection Office (\$40,000).

Expenditures include:

- \$120,000 for creative design and market research; and
- \$60,000 for outreach/promotions.

A significant amount of in-kind support is provided by City Green Solutions, through a grant provided by Natural Resources Canada. City Green Solutions is an enterprising non-profit, specializing in innovative home and building energy efficiency solutions, including home evaluations and assistance with access to grants. City Green's in-kind support will provide staff time to deliver a number of the campaign elements, such as webinars and workshops targeting realtors and builders.

#### **SUMMARY / CONCLUSION**

The Metro Vancouver home energy labelling pilot project, now branded as the RateOurHome.ca campaign, will raise awareness of home energy labelling among homebuyers and home sellers, realtors and builders. The campaign will raise awareness of the label as an informational tool at the point of sale, connecting the label with a genuine need (such as being able to identify a home that is healthy, comfortable, and reliable) and by demonstrating that the label is good value, whether buying or selling a home. GVRD Sustainability Innovation Funding in 2015 has been used to develop a research-based and audience-tested campaign that should set the frame for a multi-year awareness campaign. The campaign is soft launching in the summer of 2016, with advertising beginning in earnest in October 2016, to coincide with the fall home-buying season. Staff recommend Alternative 1, which seeks to improve uptake of the campaign by member jurisdictions, by forwarding this report to them and providing access to campaign materials.

#### **Attachments:**

1. RateOurHome.ca logo
2. RateOurHome.ca draft website content

ATTACHMENT 1: RateOurHome.ca logo



Spotting an energy efficient home just got easier.

ATTACHMENT 2: RateOurHome.ca draft website content

métrovancouver



Ask about the new EnerGuide rating.

EnerGuide helps take the guesswork out of finding a reliable, better performing, energy efficient home; allowing you to buy with peace of mind.

